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THE REFORMED THEOLOGICAL REVIEW

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THE REFORMED THEOLOGICAL REVIEW

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THE
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The Question of the Historical Jesus

In his *Christianity and Paradox*[1] (a book not so much to be answered as to be heard) Ronald Hepburn, in his chapters on "Historicity and Risk," gives articulate expression to an uneasiness which lies at the back of many minds, both inside and outside the Churches: namely, that the historical foundations of the faith are not securely laid, and that professional Christians are whistling more and more loudly in order to keep up their own courage. It is, therefore, urgently important that we should try to state as clearly as possible what we believe to be the relation between the Jesus of history and the Christ of the Church's faith. It is too easy to hold up hands of holy horror at the suggestion that such a question should be asked. Refusal to discuss it is refusal to give a reason for the faith that is in us. Hepburn rightly perceives that "the argument over historicity must be long and irreducibly complex," and rightly objects to "theologians who fail to see how complex it is, and seek prematurely a secure resting-place for an imperturbable faith." We shall leave aside the question whether "an imperturbable faith" can be anything other than a contradiction in terms, and accept Hepburn's criticism that Christians in general, and theologians in particular, have in this matter frequently sought prematurely or too exclusively a secure resting-place for their faith, and have done so in one of three directions. If we state the matter more or less historically, this is not so much to judge the past as to warn against retreat into what have proved to be spurious securities.

I.

(i) The first false resting-place in this discussion is the dogma of the Church — an affirmation which can be made without suggesting that the dogmas are themselves false. It is, however, simply not good enough to repeat the dogmas of the Church as though they resolved all questions

1. Watts, 1958.

of the relation between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith. They do not, for they are not answering the questions which are now being raised. Furthermore, exegesis and dogmatics are now in a different relation to each other from that which obtained for most of the Church's history.

For nearly eighteen hundred years the exegesis of the gospels was an auxiliary discipline to Dogmatics. The gospel records were used as a quarry for illustrative material to support, and perhaps to enrich with imaginative content, the Church's teaching about the person of Jesus Christ. Normally the gospels — three or even sometimes four — were harmonised and expounded with this end in view. This is how a great Biblical scholar of the Reformation period like Calvin treats the gospels. The older exegesis is full of excellencies and profound insights, but it never really asks the literary and historical question. Certainly, the question of the historical Jesus did not arise: few, if any, even asked the question whether the Jesus of the pre-crucifixion period was the same as the Christ of the Church's preaching and dogmas. Most men assumed that the great credal affirmations about Jesus were to be found in the gospel records, in Jesus' own self-proclamation by word and act, only perhaps they were to be found in a precredal form, the raw material out of which creeds had been refined. To the documents men returned for illustration of the affirmations of the creeds.

The 18th century saw the rise of modern historical studies, and it was inevitable that the critical historical question should be asked of the Bible, and of the historical person of Jesus Christ. At the end of that century, Hermann Samuel Reimarus drove the first wedge between the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith; and every theological student knows of Albert Schweitzer as the historian of the attempts, from Reimarus to Wrede, to write a life of Jesus. Schweitzer's *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* is in effect a history of the attempts to free the figure of Jesus from the accretions of later dogma, and present him in his 1st century setting, as he really was. By one of those reversals in pre-occupation to which the human mind is periodically subjected, the historical figure of Jesus would (it was thought and hoped) emerge to pass judgment on later assertions about him. Dogmatic orthodoxy had seen the Jesus of history and the Christ of the gospels through the eyes of the Church's formulated faith; now the Jesus of history will be disclosed by the methods of historical investigation, and later orthodoxy will be

shown up, in its truth or error, placed under judgment by him. When Schweitzer has done his work as a historian of the lives of Jesus, he feels himself obliged to draw his own picture of what Jesus was like; and he too cannot escape the question of how a historical figure has meaning for subsequent generations and for our day. In the end, he infers, both by his writings and his life, that the latter question can be answered not in theory but only in deeds. Schweitzer accepted the legitimacy of the assumption made by Reimarus that the historical Jesus — by which we mean the Jesus heard, recognised, observed in Palestine and acknowledged by the disciples in the period up to and including Good Friday — and the Christ of the Church's faith are not the same; and that assumption underlies the whole of modern study of the Gospels, however differently from Reimarus or Schweitzer other scholars may see the relation between the two. There *is* a question of the historical Jesus; and for the man of today to rest in the Church's dogmas about the person and work of Christ without facing that question is "to seek prematurely a secure resting-place for an imperturbable faith." The quest which is to be undertaken today need not, as was often the case in the 18th and 19th centuries, be in a spirit of antagonism to the Church's dogmas, which indeed it may serve. But it must be recognised that the re-affirmation of dogmas does not in itself answer historical questions. All questions must in some measure be answered in the terms in which they are asked.

(ii) Secondly, historical enquiry itself became (prematurely), and is used prematurely, as a secure resting-place for an imperturbable faith. If we could get back to what actually happened all would be well. There is little need to say much about this, because this is still the prevailing assumption of much so-called "Christian education" and "religious knowledge": on this assumption many of us have been reared. The picture of Jesus with which we operate is of course less tempestuous than that of Schweitzer or of the authors whose work he describes, one more compatible with our Anglo-Scottish ways. Despite Schweitzer's warnings, and much other evidence, it is still assumed that the Jesus of the first three gospels is a congenial figure, and that he is historically accessible: his words and actions are the basis of our faith. He is still frequently referred to as the Founder of our religion or of the Church, the great Teacher from whom we all must learn. His Way is available to us, even if difficult to follow, whereas the way of the Church's faith is obscure. Even

where the earlier liberalism has been shorn of its sentimentalities, its assumption that the Christian faith can be made secure through the methods of historical investigation prevails: it is to be found not only in liberal but in some most conservative circles, a strange victory for rationalism.

The work of source critics and of form-critics has, however, made it impossible to accept in any simple sense that the first three gospels can be regarded as sources for the knowledge of the course of Jesus' life and ministry from His birth in Bethlehem to his death on Calvary and the resurrection on the third day. It has for long been a commonplace that the gospels are not biographies of Jesus: they do not provide the information essential either for the story of his inner development (his self-consciousness) nor for the outward development of events, the story of cause and effect between different incidents recorded. Above all the work of the critics — particularly but not only the form-critics — has focussed attention on the role of the Church: our gospel materials were selected, preserved, shaped by the needs not only of the Church but of the Churches. These needs were not all of the same kind: they included evangelistic, apologetic, didactic, and liturgical needs. Behind the gospels, as we have them, lies the believing, evangelising, worshipping Church. As Dibelius once remarked: form criticism reconciled the critics and the Church.

The first quest of the historical Jesus failed from within, so to speak. The hard core of "authentic" sayings, of assured incidents, proved much more elusive than had at first been hoped. It certainly became increasingly impossible to establish the truth of the chief Christian affirmations about the person of Christ by means of historical research. Coinciding with the impossibility of such an undertaking came the awareness of its illegitimacy: here was an attempt to prove the Lord God, which must henceforth be resisted.

(iii) This has led to a third attempted resting-place, that of the kerygma, or of the gospels as we now have them. The gospels are forms of the kerygma, we are told and told rightly. Here is the Church, or more exactly several Churches, preaching the message in the second half of the first century. As in the oral period investigated by the form-critics, so in the final literary deposit which is the gospels, the control is the preaching, teaching, worshipping life of the Church. To this message of the Church at least we can turn with assurance that we know what it is.

In the kerygma we can put our trust: on it is built the Church's faith. Here is a secure resting-place for an imperturbable faith. You may not with certainty go behind the gospels, but you can rest in the gospels.

Implicitly or explicitly this construction of belief upon the preaching of the Church has also frequently been on a foundation of scepticism about the possibility of saying or knowing anything about Christ after the flesh. In some cases a virtue has been made of necessity and it has been said that it is not the Jesus of the road from Galilee to Jerusalem, observable as you might observe Napoleon on retreat from Moscow, who is the Saviour of mankind, but Jesus believed in and preached in the life of the Church. And in this there is of course profound truth. He would be of a mean and churlish mind who did not acknowledge the great gain of recent studies in the gospels as kerygma, as would the man who despises the enquiries of the great historical critics or of the exegesis of the dogmaticians which preceded them. From each stage much is to be learnt, and today we have a clearer picture than ever before of what Matthew was getting at, of what Mark believed, of how Luke saw it. Scholars in every tradition have enriched our understanding at these points. But even here we are in danger of seeking a premature resting-place for our faith. That it is premature is suggested by the following considerations:

(a) Modern man trained in historical method wants an answer, and has a right to demand it. Do these documents fairly represent the figure about Whom they speak? We now know, indeed Biblical scholars have been the first to point it out, that the wedge lies not between the Jesus of the gospels and the Christ of the later creeds; it lies between the Jesus of history and the Christ proclaimed by the gospel writers. Is there sufficient continuity here to permit us to accept the gospel writers' view of Jesus?

"There are limits to the malleability of events under imagination or 'interpretation,'" writes Hepburn. "Faces in the fire can be seen with *nearly* limitless variety; a poem may bear a *fair number* of reasonable optional interpretations, though not any and every interpretation; a penny may be seen as circle or ellipse, but not as a cone or a cube. So with historical investigations. A scrutiny of each case is necessary before a decision can be made about the reasonableness of any particular interpretation based upon available knowledge."[2] Or, more briefly, Hermann Diem: "The evangelistic character of the text must not be

2. Op. cit. p. 108.

stressed in such a way as to banish the historian to a realm where all cats are grey."[3]

(b) Hand in hand with emphasis on the kerygma (indeed a part of it), goes the claims that Christian faith is an interpretation of history, a proclamation of an event (action of God) which changed the course of history. Since that event is an action of God it is unlikely that its full significance will be apparent to the historian; but if it is an event, something will be observable. *If I by the finger of God cast out devils, then is the kingly rule of God come upon you.* If devils were cast out, other explanations than the inbreaking of the kingly rule were possible; but if it could be shown that devils were not cast out, then the evidence for the inbreaking of the kingdom is lacking. The kerygma invites investigation of the facts, even though such an investigation may not be conclusive.

(c) The gospels themselves speak of events in a past time and thus invite investigation — historical investigation — of those events. Admittedly they do so for the sake of faith in the present. But they are clear that that faith "does not begin with itself but lives from past history" (Bornkamm).[4] It is, as Diem says, about events *extra nos: "In this history* a decision has been made affecting the hearer personally and his whole personal destiny."[5]

So, it appears, we must ask again the question about the historical Jesus. Can we do so this time without falling into one of the errors of the past? The possible errors, as we have seen, are three: (i) Can we do so in such a way that we really ask an historical question and do not only read back into the figure to whom the gospels point, the lineaments of the Christ of the Church's dogma? To fail here would be to fail in honesty, for we should be pretending to answer one question while in fact discussing another.

(ii) Can we do so without falling back into the old historicism? To fail here will be to turn faith into rationalism, and make it depend upon the results of a particular kind of historical research.

(iii) Can we do so, taking radically seriously the nature of the gospel records as forms of the Kerygma which speak about a decisive event in past history? To fail here will be to turn our back upon the most precious recovery of awareness of the gospels as faith-bearing,

3. Hermann Diem **Dogmatics**, p. 122 (E. T. of Theologie II), Oliver & Boyd, 1959.
4. **Jesus of Nazareth**, E. T., p. 23 (Hodder & Stoughton, 1960).
5. Op. cit., p. 126.

faith-exciting texts. And yet, to take this so seriously that we dare not ask the difficult historical question, will be simply to deliver ourselves over to a new bibliolatry. The hazards are considerable: how to take dogma, history, sacred text all seriously without falling into dogmatism, historicism or biblicism: In other words, how is the Christian scholar to live the life of freedom of enquiry for which Christ has set him free?

II.

So now we have to think through three things in relation: history, i.e., what happened or what was observed to have happened in a decisive period of human history; the gospel records, both in their literary and pre-literary stages; the dogmas of the Church, as reflection upon and guidance to the understanding of what happened in its total significance for faith. In doing so, and asking afresh the question of the historical Jesus, we may bear in mind certain considerations:

1. The tools at our disposal for "the new quest" are much more adequate than those available to men of the 18th and 19th centuries. By the same token, it is easier for for us to blind ourselves with science.

It would be wilful to pretend that we are not better equipped for the quest than any previous generation. Methods of literary criticism, of sources and forms of the tradition, knowledge of Palestinian conditions and language, awareness of the religious and perhaps particularly the eschatological perspectives of contemporary Judaism, all make possible a movement back from the situation in the life of the Church (which so often colours the gospel records) towards a probable situation in the ministry of Jesus, a movement much more exactly *controlled* than was available a generation ago. To take but one example, Jeremias' book on *The Parables of Jesus*[6] shows what can and may be done with such wealth of new information.

It is however extremely easy to use the greater knowledge to cheat and confuse. Archæology, numismatics, studies in the Qumran community and contemporary Graeco-Roman religion, Rabbinics can all be used to cast light on the milieu of the gospels, the environment in which Jesus lived; but they do not touch on the central question. Hans Conzelmann has protested in the strongest terms

6. E. T., S.C.M. Press, 1954.

against what he calls "methodological anarchy"[7] confusion between indirect sources of knowledge of the world of the Bible and the direct sources of information — in the case of the historical Jesus the gospels themselves. Ethelbert Stauffer's *Jesus and His Story*[8] is an excellent example of such blinding with science. That which is plausible is passed off as that which scholarship supports. This leads to our second consideration, namely—

2. The question of the historical Jesus and his relation to the Christ of faith is raised by the gospels and must be investigated through the gospels. Historians may wish that it were otherwise, that there were some other evidence for what the Jesus of history was like; but there is not, and there is not likely to be. Christian scholars must, as we have indicated, resist the temptation to produce pseudo-evidence; they must also resist the temptation to fill the gaps by psychological speculation. "Jesus must increasingly have become aware of . . ." Such sentences are to be eschewed. The story of an inner development just as the story of a chronological development is beyond our recovery. We must use the materials we have (the gospels) and be faithful to the information which they provide, observing even more carefully their peculiar character. In this connection two observations may be made—

(i) The story of Jesus in the gospel records is processed by faith in the Risen Lord from beginning to end. The recognition that any historical enquiry has to do with events processed by the human minds through whom they have reached us is now accepted by so-called secular historians. Sir George Clark writing the Introduction to the first volume to appear of *The New Cambridge Modern History* has said:

> "Nineteenth century historians, like 19th century scientists, prided themselves on their discoveries . . . they scored so many successes in disposing of lies and legends by the confrontation of crucial facts, that they came to think of facts as a kind of indestructible atom, by the adding together of which true history could be composed. With something of this sort in mind, they looked forward to a future when it would be possible to write 'definitive history.' Historians of a later date do not look forward to any such prospect . . . They consider that knowledge of the past has come down to us through many human minds, has been 'processed' by

7. Z. T. K., 56 Beiheft 1, 1959, p. 8.
8. E.T., S.C.M. Press, 1960.

them, and therefore cannot consist of elemental and impersonal atoms which nothing can alter."

The change in attitude towards the question of the historical Jesus could scarcely be better expressed.

What do we know about this "processing"? Chiefly this, that "between Jesus and the Kerygma stands the fact of the Resurrection" (Conzelmann). The great gain of the old quest was, as we have seen, its recognition that "the historical Jesus and the Christ proclaimed by the Church and in the gospels are not the same." We now know why this should be the case. Between Jesus and the Kerygma takes place an event whereby the Proclaimer became the Proclaimed One, the One who calls to faith becomes the One believed in. The preaching, worshipping Church and the gospel writers now read back into the pre-Easter history elements which were not apparent at the time. Again and again they show themselves to be more interested in who Jesus is than in Who He was. He does not, in Bornkamm's phrase, belong to a museum; and since he was not found there, they do not put him there. He is their living Lord, and they use — with great freedom — the traditional stories and sayings which belong to his pre-Easter life to make clear Who He is and what He now says to His people.

If we like to put it that way, the Easter event is responsible for the element of discontinuity between the Jesus of history and the Lord of the Church's faith.

(ii) The story of Jesus in the gospel records also points to elements of continuity between the teaching and actions of Jesus and the preaching of the early Church. Were it not so we should be in danger of worshipping a mythical Lord. The manner in which the gospel record comes to us itself testifies to the continuity. Little of it comes in continuous narratives which depended for their meaning on their context. True the gospel writers underline the meaning of incidents and sayings by *their* arrangement of material. But however much they arrange and adapt the material, it is clear that they do not create the significance of individual parables, miracle-stories, sayings and incidents of all sorts. Again and again an incident stands stands out in its own right, so to speak: each pericope alive and bringing its own word of judgment and mercy from its original utterance or occurrence. Indeed it becomes clear that no incident, saying or action of Jesus, has been preserved to us which in its first occurrence did not confront the observer with the issue of faith or

unbelief, and which in its repetition did not continue to provoke that reaction.

It is sometimes said that the gospel records consist of event plus interpretation; and this is true enough, but it can be a misleading mathematical metaphor. When someone says x + y, we assume that it is possible to think of x separately from y. But it is not possible to think of the gospel events apart from their interpretation: they provoke the issue of faith or unbelief in the observer still — not credulity or incredulity as to this, that or the other detail (that can be a matter of argument), but faith or unbelief that in that saying or incident the Kingly rule of God confronts us (as it did the Pharisees or the disciples) with an Either/Or, a life or death decision. If this is existentialism, it is an existentialism which derives from, not one which is imposed upon the gospel record.

Hans Conzelmann has remarked that the two most important sentences in Bultmann's *Theology of the N.T.* are (a) that the preaching of Jesus is not the content but the pre-supposition of N.T. theology; (b) that Jesus' call to decision implied a Christology. Certainly there is a break discernible between what Jesus taught and what was taught about him, there is a distinction to be made between the message of Jesus and the message about him. But one moves inescapably to the other. "Our task," writes Bornkamm, "is to seek the history *in* the Kerygma of the Gospels, and in this history to seek the Kerygma. If we are asked to differentiate between the two, that is only for the purpose of revealing more clearly their interconnection and interpenetration."[9]

III.

Without suggestion that this brief discussion can be brought to a conclusion, two further points ought to be made before it stops.

First it may need to be observed that there is no general answer about the relation of the gospel records to observable history on the one hand, and to the teaching of the Church (formulated interpretation of the significance of what happened) on the other. Not every incident and saying as we have them on the pages of the gospels is equidistant from these two points. For instance, the birth narratives in Matthew and Luke are painted strongly in the colours of the Church's faith and piety. The "events" of which they speak can scarcely be reconstructed with confidence by means of historical investigation. Some, the

9. Op. cit., p. 21.

most important, conception by the Holy Spirit, birth from a virgin, cannot by the nature of the case be verified. Here faith alone speaks to faith alone. At other points — for instance in the parables, as Jeremias has shown, and to some degree in the events connected with the passion — it is possible with greater confidence to move from the "Sitz im Leben der Alten Kirche" to the "Sitz im Leben Jesu." The resurrection narratives provide special problems again, which would need to be separately discussed. The historicity of the gospel events is not best protected by pretending that all events are patient of the same kind of questioning.

Secondly, the question may be asked whether it is possible for the Christian theologian to maintain an attitude of critical investigation at the same time as one of reverent devotion. The answer must be that this is the way the human mind always works. In a notable series of books and articles Michael Polanyi has been demonstrating that Augustine's dictum, Except you believe you will not understand, sets forth the conditions not merely of religious knowledge but of all understanding. This does not mean that we know the answer before we ask the question, which is what it looks like when we slip back into the older dogmatism, reading the gospel narratives through a later scheme. Rather it means that what Polanyi calls the tacit powers of understanding are holding in position our explicit enquiries. Our response to the whole is seeking a clarification in its understanding of the part under explicit investigation. Our attitude to the whole, be it one of reverence or of antagonism, makes possible penetration in the critical enquiry into the parts.

Schweitzer drew attention to the part that love and hatred played in the first quest. "No vital force comes into the figure unless a man breathes into it all the hate or all the love of which he is capable. The stronger the love or the stronger the hate, the more life-like is the figure which is produced. For hate as well as love can write a life of Jesus, and the greatest of them are written with hate . . . It was not so much hate of the person of Jesus as of the supernatural nimbus with which it was so easy to surround him, and with which in fact he had been surrounded. They were eager to picture him as truly and purely human, to strip from him the robes of splendour with which he had been apparelled, and clothe him once more with the coarse garments in which he had walked in Galilee."

What for us is the appropriate motive with which to undertake this enquiry? Not the dogmatism which appears

to know the answer before it asks the question, nor the rationalism which would eliminate the supernatural in advance. These passions (for they were passions) have served man and had their day. For us the call is for a quieter reverence, held with a like passion, the passion of humility before mystery. To quote Polanyi again: there are some substances which you can only see through a microscope, others through a telescope; you will only see greatness through reverence. To the enquiring mind, kept to its task by reverence, the Jesus of history will reveal the greatness of the Father's kingdom; and we may rediscover in a way which is vital for this generation the truth that the Jesus of history and the Christ of the Church's faith are one.

J. D. McCAUGHEY.

Recent Developments in Baptist Theology

Since the days of the Reformation baptism has never been so much under discussion as during the last twenty years. Several factors can easily be distinguished.

In the first place, leading theologians, themselves belonging to Paedobaptist Churches, have openly and vigorously challenged the legitimacy of infant baptism. It started with Emil Brunner's "Wahrheit als Begegnung" in 1938[1], who not only stated that "the contemporary practice of infant baptism can hardly be regarded as being anything short of scandalous," but also declared his view that baptism is both an act of grace and an act of confession. In 1943 Karl Barth delivered his famous lecture on "Die kirchliche Lehre von der Taufe,"[2] which set the debate really going. In several countries young ministers were so impressed by the authoritative voice of the maestro that they even started to change the common practice. Other theologians, however, published thoroughgoing defences of infant baptism. We mention a few names only: G. C. Berkouwer (Holland),[3] O. Cullmann (Switzerland),[4] J. Jeremias (Germany),[5] and P. Ch. Marcel (France).[6]

1. E. Tr. The Divine-Human Encounter, 1944.
2. E. Tr. The Teaching of the Church regarding Baptism, 1948.
3. Karl Barth en de Kinderdoop, 1947.
4. Die Tauflehre des Neuen Testaments, 1948. E. Tr. Baptism in the New Testament, 1950.
5. Hat die Urkirche die Kindertaufe geuebt?, 1949.
6. Le Bapteme. Sacrament de l' Alliance de Grace, La Revue Reformee, 1950. E. Tr. The Biblical Doctrine of Infant Baptism, 1953.

The second factor to be mentioned here is the growing uneasiness in many Churches about the existing practice of infant baptism. This disquietude led to an explicit reflection upon the entire doctrine of baptism. We can mention here the discussion within the Church of England,[7] the Congregational Union of England and Wales[8] and the Church of Scotland,[9] — not to speak of several Churches in Holland and Germany.

Thirdly, there is the Ecumenical Movement, which aims at bringing the Churches together, but in this way also confronts them with their several differences. After the rather easy agreements in Lausanne (1927) and Edinburgh (1937), it became manifest in Lund (1952) that the divergencies are rather deep-rooted and intricate, and a new Theological Commission was set up to study "the nature of the Church in close relation both to the doctrine of the person and work of Christ and to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit." We think also of the difficulties involved in the proposed re-union schemes in Ceylon, and in North India and Pakistan. Both schemes suggest the practice of infant baptism and believers' baptism side by side.[10]

Of course, this recent development of the controversy about baptism did not pass the Baptist theologians by. True, at first they took little part in the discussion. Perhaps this was so, because they thought that others were fighting the battle for them. Gradually, however, a change took place. It clearly appeared that Brunner, Barth and others certainly were not on the way of becoming Baptists. Furthermore, there were the many differences in their own circles. All these things led them to a renewed study of their own position.

One of the main results of this study undoubtedly is the symposium on "Christian Baptism," edited by A. Gilmore. This 343-page volume, first published in 1959, contains many valuable articles (among others one on Baptismal Controversies, 1640-1900, by the Rev. D. M. Himbury, now Principal of the Baptist College in Melbourne), and it shows a surprising development in Baptist thought — a development which fully deserves our intense interest. We realise that it will not do to identify

7. Cf. Confirmation To-day, 1944 (the first interim report); The Theology of Christian Initiation, 1948 (the report of the Theological Commission, appointed by the Archbishops); Baptism To-day, 1949 (the second interim report); Baptism and Confirmation To-day, 1954 (the final report).

8. Cf. Chr. Baptism (ed. by A. Gilmore), 19f.

9. Cf. the Interim Reports of the Special Commission on Baptism, published in 1955, 1956, 1957 and 1958.

10. Cf. Studies on Baptism, ed. by James Gray, 43ff.

the views propagated in this volume with the official doctrine of the Baptist Churches. But it is indeed very significant that a volume like this one did appear in Baptist circles. Moreover, its value is enhanced by the fact, stated by the editor in the preface, that it gives us "the fruits of group thinking rather than a simple collection of essays." Though each writer is responsible for his own contribution, yet the aim has been, as far as conscience allows, to embody the opinions of the group. Particularly interesting and important is the last chapter on The Theology of Baptism, by Neville Clark. This author, who also wrote a volume on the doctrine of the sacraments in general,[11] is not afraid of breaking fresh ground and treading new paths. In the present article we will concentrate especially upon this last chapter. — Another important publication is the booklet "Studies on Baptism," edited by James Gray in 1959. In this booklet members of the Union Committee of Churches of Christ give their view of the recent development of the controversy. Though not as provocative as the other symposium, it also shows a fresh approach to the problems involved and is typical of the open-mindedness which characterises the present-day discussions.

* * *

One of the most striking features of both books is the spirit in which they have been written. Nowhere one finds a proud condemnation of others, who hold the opposite view, but there is a genuine aim to understand their position and to honour their motives. Nor does one find a superficial or facile defence of doctrines or practices held in their own circles, but on several points a *severe criticism* of generally accepted Baptist views and customs is given.

In connection with the doctrine of the covenant Clark not only mentions his grave objections against the Paedobaptist view, but openly says that "the Baptist position in many ways fits even more uneasily with Biblical theology."[12] In the discussion on the correlation between baptism and faith the same author speaks of "the persistent Baptist myopia in respect to the prevenience of grace, so far as infant blessing is concerned," and he calls it "scarcely less disastrous" than the theological confusion

11. An approach to the Theology of the Sacraments, Studies in Biblical Theology, No. 17, 1956.

12. Chr. Baptism, 316.

which Paedobaptists have sown by the introduction of infant baptism.[13]

Some pet ideas and practices, very common in Baptist circles, are rejected or corrected in a few lines. With regard to the *mode* of baptism, Clark declares: "We have no warrant for making any one mode obligatory."[14] True, he still holds, with Karl Barth,[15] that immersion should have the normative place, since it provides the closest possible correspondence between sign and signification. Yet, a statement as above quoted, means a rather strong condemnation of the common one-sided emphasis on immersion as the only legitimate mode.[16] Very important is also what the author says about the *relation between baptism and communion.* "First communion is received by many apart from, and prior to, baptism," which means that "the whole theological and sacramental progression proper to initiation is ignored and denied."[17] He also utterly rejects the idea of *rebaptism* as believers of those who have received baptism in infancy. Such a rebaptism "constitutes a blow at the heart of the Christian faith." "As there is one Lord, and one faith, so there is but one baptism. To the very end the Christological pattern must remain decisive. Baptism stands under the *ephapax* of redemption. The whole meaning of the rite hinges on its once-for-allness, its unrepeatability. The assertion of the partial nature of infant baptism and the serious theological distortion it involves does not carry with it the unqualified dismissal of it as 'no baptism'; rather does the eschatological nature of the rite forbid so negative a verdict. For no baptism can lack its proleptic element, and every baptism points forward for its completion and fulfilment."[18] The author is here fully in line with Karl Barth, who also strongly condemns the idea of rebaptism. For Barth, too, baptism is first of all an act of Jesus[19] and shares in the once-for-

13. Op. cit. 323.

14. Op. cit. 325.

15. Karl Barth, op. cit. 9f.

16. Cf. also William G. Baker in Studies on Baptism, 38, "The 'disunity of baptism' lies in the significance of the difference between infant-baptism and believer-baptism. The real difference is not primarily a matter either of the age at which, or the form in which, baptism is administered. It is true that believer-baptism is normally by immersion, and that to Churches of Christ (Disciples) and many Baptist Churches, only this symbolic action adequately expresses what baptiism conveys. This, by itself, would not be enough to justify the unfortunate separation of believer-baptists and the overwhelming number of the mass-churches. Only the conviction that infant-baptism is a contradiction of the Gospel would justify this separation, and this is the conviction of believer-baptists."

17. Chr. Baptism, 325.

18. Op. cit. 325/6.

19. K. Barth, op. cit. 19, 29.

allness of His redemptive work.[20] Further, he also sees a decisive eschatological dimension in baptism.[21] Therefore "rebaptism involves a defaming of baptism and is, as Vilmar has rightly said, blasphemy against God."[22]

* * *

All these points, however, are only details. Though they are very significant in themselves, yet they do not *per se* affect the theological structure, which underlies the doctrine of believers' baptism. The two decisive pillars of this structure are the view of the covenant of grace and that of the correlation between baptism and faith.

This means, of course, that in actual fact the discussion of baptism goes far beyond the limits of the "Locus de Baptismo." Just as in the case of all other "Loci" our whole theology is involved. Clark fully recognises this. He openly states that it is impossible to come to a decision on the ground of the apostolic practice, as designed in the New Testament. "The overriding appeal must always be to New Testament theology rather than New Testament practice. Practice must be the corollary of theology; the clarification of the latter must precede the revision of the former. But to attempt to delineate the structure of baptismal theology is at once to be driven back to more basic doctrines, to questions of Christology, ecclesiology and eschatology."[23]

This is indeed the only correct starting point. Everyone who forgets this and limits the discussion of baptism to more or less isolated texts makes his argument sterile from the very start. For the real decision is not taken in the exegesis of these texts, but in the theology, with which the exegete approaches the texts. Taken by themselves the texts all happen to be of an ambiguous nature, as far as the "subject" of baptism is concerned. There is not a single text in the whole New Testament which explicitly commands or prohibits the baptism of infants. There is therefore but one way: to study the whole structure of the New Testament and to ask the question: what is the theological place of baptism and of the children within this structure.

Clark takes his *starting point* in the *Christology.*

20. K. Barth, op. cit. 64.

21. K. Barth, op. cit. 62f.

22. K. Barth, op. cit. 64.

23. Chr. Baptism 311. Cf. O. Cullmann, op. cit. 26. "It can be decided only on the ground of N.T. doctrine: Is infant Baptism compatible with the N.T. conception of the essence and meaning of Baptism?" Cf. also H. H. Rowley, The Unity of the Bible, 1957, 214 (note 41), who quotes several similar statements.

"Since baptism initiates into the fulness of redemption, into the crucified and glorified humanity of the Lord, the pattern of the Christ event must be interpretatively decisive."[24] On purpose he speaks of the "Christ event." It is not correct to take one aspect of Christ's life, for example, His death and resurrection as the complete pattern. The *whole* Christ is the pattern: the Christ of the incarnation, of the cross and the resurrection, of the ascension and the parousia. This pattern teaches us several important truths. In the first place, it teaches that the *priority is always with God.* Throughout Christ's whole life, from the incarnation through the parousia, the primacy of the divine is clearly shown. But, secondly, there is also the clear fact of the inseparability of divine action and human response. "It is as mediator and only as mediator, God grasping hold of His fallen creation and man rendering back full homage and free submission, that He atones."[25]

Undoubtedly Clark touches here the heart of the matter. Jesus Christ, the God-given Saviour, very God and very man, is the centre of the whole revelation and the whole redemption. In Him God and man are united in an inseparable unity. In Him God acts, saving man by His grace, which precedes all human activity. In Him man acts, rendering free and perfect obedience to God.

However, the picture is not yet complete. Jesus Christ is, as this mediator, also and at the same time the centre of *God's covenant of grace with man.* What is the place and function of the covenant of grace in this pattern? Clark himself also asks this question immediately. And in particular at this point we see how he is prepared to abandon old cherished positions and to review the whole situation.

On the one hand, he still rejects the Paedobaptist view that "in New Israel the children of believers take their automatic place within the sphere of the new covenant and are thus fit recipients of the initiatory rite."[26] In his opinion the evidence of the Paedobaptists is not strong enough. As an example he mentions I Cor. 7:14, a text usually claimed as supporting infant baptism. The only inference that could be drawn from this text is Cullmann's cautious statement: "From the idea of holiness represented here there is a direct line to infant baptism, but none to a

24. Chr. Baptism, 311.
25. Op. cit. 313.
26. Op. cit. 314.

baptism based on a later decision of those sons and daughters who are born in a Christian home." But Cullmann goes too far, when he says: "This text may certainly be said to presuppose an idea of collective holiness . . . in the sense of a reception into the Body of Christ." If this were true, the unbelieving partner in the marriage would also be incorporated into the Body of Christ by virtue of marriage to a Christian partner.[27] Much stronger is the circumcision-analogy. With Cullmann, Clark rejects Barth's view that circumcision is bound up with natural and racial succession. It is bound up with divine salvation-history (Heilsgeschichte), with the Abrahamic covenant of promise, universal and supra-racial in its inference. But then he again starts to criticise Cullmann. The latter would discuss baptism and circumcision "with such little reference to the Cross and Resurrection." He would not sufficiently honour the great interruption of the Christ event. With Cullmann "continuity has got the bit between its teeth."— The remarkable thing here is that Clark fully admits a certain degree of continuity between the two dispensations of the covenant, but — does not give it any relevance in the discussion on baptism! The implications of baptism have to be wholly derived from the Cross-Resurrection event. "By the discontinuity in unity of salvation-history, the continuities of history KATA SARKA are broken and judged."[28] In other words, all that is left is discontinuity!

On the other hand, Clark strongly criticises his own fellow-Baptists. "The Baptist position in many ways fits even more uneasily with Biblical theology. Its preoccupation with the recipient and the mode of baptism at the expense, so often, of the meaning and purpose of the rite, has constantly exposed its supporters to the charge of tithing mint and anise and cummin whilst neglecting the weightier matters of the law. And if Paedo-Baptism is often tied too firmly to the continuities of natural history, the Baptist case persistently violates the unity of *Heilsgeschichte*, sundering old and new covenant, old Israel and new Israel." He then rejects the birth-faith contrast, i.e., the view that the old covenant would be a matter of a natural and racial succession determined by birth, over against a supra-racial succession determined by human choice for

27. Op. cit. 314f. Clark does not seem to realise that the two kinds of holiness mentioned here, are not identical, as appears from the different terminology: HEGIASTHAI and HAGIA ESTIN (cf. Godet, ad locum). Further it should be noted that the statement about the holiness of the children is not a conclusion from, but the ground for the statement about the unbelieving partner. This again proves that the cases are not identical.

28. Op. cit. 316.

the new covenant.[29] The old covenant is certainly not one-sidedly collective, but in the collectivism there is a recognition of the individual. — However, again all this has no real significance for his view of baptism. All emphasis is again on the "Christ event." "By the Cross and Resurrection the old covenant is both negated and fulfilled. It is the Christ event and that alone which governs interpretation, the measure both of continuity and discontinuity. The Christological pattern must be all-controlling."[30] Again the collective aspect all of a sudden disappears behind the Christological (which is combined with a strong emphasis on eschatology[31]).

The *basic weakness* of this argument, in our opinion, is the fact that Clark does not seem to realise sufficiently that the whole life and work of Christ is set in the framework of the covenant. We cannot possibly think of Christ apart from the covenant. He is not only its centre, but also its fulfilment. As we noticed above, Clark also says that in Christ the covenant is fulfilled. But he immediately connects the idea of fulfilment with that of negation. The latter is even mentioned first! Due to this combination he cannot maintain the continuity, but it is fully devoured by the discontinuity. In the New Testament, however, the idea of fulfilment cannot be so simply related to that of negation. To fulfil means here first of all: to bring to its full validity (cf. for example, Matt. 5:17 and all the places which speak of the fulfilment of the Scriptures). Of course, there is often also the element of negation, but this has a bearing only on that which does not belong to the "reality and substance," but only to the "administration" of the covenant.[32] The question, which Clark should have asked and answered is: does the collective aspect ("thee and thy seed") belong to the essence or to the administration of the covenant? In our opinion, the Old Testament itself does not leave here any room for doubt. The collective aspect was not introduced first at the establishment of the covenant at Sinai (the "national" covenant), but from the beginning it is an essential part of the "covenant of promise" with Abraham. The central promise of the

29. There is here a marked difference with another author in this symposium. A. Gilmore, the editor, says: "In the old covenant, birth and proselytisation are the significant factors; in the new covenant, the significant factor is faith," op. cit. 63. The whole argument of this author, as far as this point is concerned, is rather confused. Cf. his contrast "impersonal-racial" (O.T.) and "personal-corporate" (N.T.), loc. cit.

30. Op. cit. 317.

31. Cf. op. cit. 319.

32. Cf. Calvin Instit. II, X, 2.

covenant: "to be a God," is immediately linked up with this collective aspect: "unto thee and thy seed after thee" (Gen. 17:7). Only against this background the collective aspects of the New Testament can be explained. The various texts may be ambiguous in themselves, as far as their direct bearing on the doctrine of baptism is concerned, yet their collective slant cannot be denied. We think of Acts 2:39,[33] I Cor. 7:14[34] and also the passages which speak of the baptism of entire households.[35] That Clark has not been able to honour these aspects, has but one reason: he did not think through sufficiently the relation between Christ and the covenant.

* * *

What then is the *theological place of the children?*

In this respect there are some important discrepancies between the views of the several authors of the symposium. S. F. Winyard declares that children, even of Christian parents, are not born "in Christ," and need to be won through the preaching of the Gospel, and their response to it in repentance and faith.[36] — R. E. O. White is not satisfied with the usual Baptist answer: "they belong to God."[37] For what does "belong" mean here? He himself says that Jesus' attitude was indeed totally new in religious thought, but (a) Jesus nowhere suggests that repentance and faith are now unnecessary; and (b) He is equally sympathetic towards the sick, the afflicted, etc. White is also of the opinion that the blessing of the children by

33. Cf. Studies in Baptism, 13. "Although the relationship of the old covenant to the new was seen in different ways by the early Church (as the varied views of the synoptic Gospels, of Paul and of Hebrews show), the common understanding of being covenant-people was thoroughly Jewish. This understanding was, for the Jews, that God had made covenant with an individual as representative of a group based on the family. For all the individual-personal demands of the new coverant, the essential concept of **family** and **household** was not suddenly overthrown. It was one of the given facts of life that children were included with their parents in the covenant and its sign. It was natural that Peter's sermon (Acts ii: 38, 39) should recall the Deuteronomic pronouncement: "You stand . . . all of you before the Lord . . . all the men of Israel, your little ones, your wives . . . that thou shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord thy God . . ." (Deut. XXIX, 9ff).

34. However difficult the exegesis of this text may be, there is clearly a collective aspect.

35. Even if all these passages are explained as referring to believing persons only, then there is still the surprising fact that **all** the members of the family hearing the Good News believe forthwith. Rightly Marcel asks: "Does this astonish nobody? How does it come to pass? Most certainly it is the result of the Holy Spirit's action in **all** the members of the family. But this willingness of the Spirit to bestow salvation on **all** the members of the family **without exception** — parents and children, whatever their age — is precisely the clearest demonstration that **the Spirit is acting in the organic line of the covenant of grace,**" op. cit. 194.

36. Chr. Baptism, 51.

37. Cf. the Reply of the Baptist Union to the Lambeth Appeal on Church Unity, 1920, op. cit. 102.

Jesus (Mark 10:13ff.) and a passage as Matt. 18:5, 6 have not any bearing on the problem of infant baptism.

Clark goes rather deeply into this matter. He introduces two distinctions: (a) Between the believers (and their children) and unbelievers (and their children); (b) Between the believers and the children of believers. "The former, i.e., the believers, are those to whom the Word of God can be addressed and has been addressed, from whom a response is elicited, who have been engrafted into the Totus Christus. The latter, i.e., the children of believers, are those who, by the fact of their birth, are especially related to the Body of Christ."[38] — This is a very important statement indeed. The contrast is not any more: old covenant — birth, and new covenant — response of faith. Also in the new covenant there is a place for the aspect of birth. Yet it is not sufficient for baptism, since the latter requires faith.

What is the ground for this special place of the children of believers? It is not the covenant-idea, for the Christ event brings the crucial element of discontinuity with it,[39] but it is the Christian character of the marriage of the believing parents. Clark speaks of the Christian character of this marriage in a very massive way. "Christian marriage is rooted in redemption; it is reality only as it is within the body of Christ." It is the "one flesh" within the redemptive circle of the union of member with member and body with Head. — All this is so massive that one gets the impression that the foundation of the special place of the children is here even more biological than the covenantal conception would ever allow!

The practical significance for the child is that it has a relation to the Church, which is indirect, but real. It is manifested "in the influences of grace which constantly press in upon such infants." For that reason the ceremony of blessing is altogether fitting, if only it is first of all seen as an "opus Dei." But this relationship is not yet the insertion into the Body of Christ! Baptism is therefore not in the issue. "From that relation to Christ in His Church which infant blessing declares, the line moves forward to that insertion into the Body of the Lord which believers' baptism accomplishes."[40]

The final result is rather meagre. There is a relationship, which is peculiar to the children of believers, but in

38. Op. cit. 321.
39. Op. cit. 322.
40. Op. cit. 323.

fact it is only an external relationship to the Church. These children do not have a more special relation with Christ Himself than the children of unbelieving parents. They all stand under the same eschatological point of view: In Christ the "eschaton" has broken into history. "Henceforth the whole human race from infancy to old age is marked with the seal of redemption, and no sign is needed to declare it, save only the Cross which shouts its triumphant message from a hundred thousand churches."[41] Only through baptism the insertion into the Body of Christ, the Totus Christus, i.e., Christ Himself and His Church, takes place.

All this means that essentially the older Baptist position is fully retained. Certain aspects of the Paedobaptist theology are admitted, but these aspects do not really function in the Baptist theology. Halfway, they become ineffective through (1) a certain view of the Christ event (discontinuity in the continuity); and (2) a certain view of baptism, which (a) *effects* the insertion into Christ and His body (therefore there cannot be any insertion before baptism), and (b) always supposes the response of faith.

* * *

The last point, however, needs more attention. For, although here too the older Baptist position is basically retained, there are several new emphases, which fully deserve our attention.

For one thing, Clark openly rejects the Baptist overestimation of the value of the human decision in baptism. Says he: "Baptism is a sacrament of the Gospel, not of our experience of it; of God's faithfulness, not of our faithful response to Him; and any theological formulation which lends itself so readily to an interpretation of the rite primarily in terms of public confession of faith must at once be suspect."[42] This is fully in line with his view of the incarnation and Christology as a whole. The incarnation can only be interpreted as an event which clearly shows the priority of God's grace. "The priority is always with God, for the incarnation is rightly to be understood not in terms of Adoptionist Christology, but of the *assumptio carnis;* and this principle remains regulative for the theology of baptism."[43] Though faith is an absolute necessity for baptism, yet "this faith is not a human act,

41. Op. cit. 319, cf. 321.

42. Op. cit. 316. Cf. Studies on Baptism, 49.

43. Op. cit. 311. Cf. p. 313, "the primacy of the divine" in Christ's baptism at Jordan.

some autonomous human element in the transaction of redemption, separable from the divine gift and summons." It is "the creation of the Spirit of God,"(44) a real "opus Dei" — yet being at the same time man's free act. Clark even admits that there is "no warrant for questioning the ability of God to act for and in men on the basis of vicarious faith or of no faith at all."(45) Even the idea of the "ex opere operato non ponentibus obicem" cannot be rejected, if taken as a statement of a general principle governing the vehicles of God's activity!

However, all this has no real relevance for the doctrine of baptism. Here the response must be a present and factual reality. "If the response itself be *opus Dei,* yet incorporation must wait upon that Amen being spoken."(45a) With regard to baptism the priority of God's grace can never mean that there are cases, where there is not yet a response. In the whole of Clark's theology the response gets so much emphasis that even the incarnation itself is inseparably linked up with it! Of course, there cannot be here a response of the baby Jesus Himself. Clark is forced to admit that this miracle is a sheer act of grace; the humanity of the Lord has concrete subsistence only in and as a result of the hypostatic union. Yet here, too, the element of response is introduced, namely in the "fiat" of Mary, which preceded and made it possible(!), and in the subsequent filial human response of the Incarnate Himself.(46)

K. RUNIA.

(To be concluded)

44. Op. cit. 323 Cf. S. I. Buse on pp. 126ff, opposing the view of Marcus Barth, who makes baptism a more or less purely human action.

45. Op. cit. 313. In a note Clark refers to Matt. 8:10; Mark 2:5; 9:14ff.

45a. Op. cit. 319.

46. Op. cit. 312.

Book Reviews

HEBREW THOUGHT COMPARED WITH GREEK

By Professor Thorlief Boman, Oslo. Translated from the German by Jules L. Moreau (S.C.M., London), 1960, pp. 224; 21/-.

We owe a big debt to Professor Boman for this study of the Hebrew and the Greek ways of thinking. He makes it clear repeatedly that both these ways are valid and valuable; it is not, as the reader of Dr. Nygren might easily infer, that *agape* is "right" and *eros* "wrong." To us the Hebrew way comes with authority, but it is in the Greek way that our own habit of thought is cast.

I can only give a brief sketch of his argument. First, as regards the word "word": the Hebrew thinks of a person and a "drive forward," then he speaks the word, and the result is action; but the Greek *legein* means first of all to gather, collect, arrange, and so one collects

information, and thinks, and then speaks the word, and the whole is a rational process (p. 68). Next, while the Greek describes what he sees (just like us, who are fond of photographs), the Hebrew never describes the Temple, for instance, in such a way that we can picture what it looked like; he does not work primarily with visual images. Thus in the Song of Songs, the maiden's neck and her nose (4:4, 7:4) and her breasts (8:10) are described as a "tower"; and the tower is a fortification, hung with "a thousand bucklers" (4:4), so that the meaning is that the lover who wins such a bride has conquered a proud fortress (pp. 77-8). Hence the diagrams in our text-books which represent the world as a hollow sphere with the waters of the firmament above and below, are all wrong; for the Hebrews knew quite well that rain comes from clouds, not from holes in the sky (p. 176); when "the windows of heaven are opened," this is eschatological mythology (p. 177). So the Professor deals with the Hebrew and Greek conceptions of Time and Space, Quantity and Number, History and Nature. A "thing" is to the Hebrew a dynamic reality, to the Greek something to be rationally studied, in a search for clarity and objective truth (pp. 184ff.).

Professor Boman gives us so much that we want more. Two lines may be suggested:

(i) There is the difference between Hebrew and Greek Christology. The Greek theologians clarify the subject most valuably, using terms such as *prosopon, hypostasis, ousia.* But the Hebrew shows us who the Messiah is by what He does, in salvation and judgment; in Him is seen the divine Mercy (Matt. 9:27-29) for the healing of body and soul, and there is a Christology of saving action in Mark 2:17 ("I came not to call the righteous but sinners"), Luke 19:10 ("the Son of man is come to seek and save that which was lost"). He makes a supreme claim of authority in the Cleansing of the Temple (Mark 11:15-18, 27-28) without any verbal claim at all.

(ii) Then there is our doctrine of Revelation. We are apt to seek in the Bible for Propositional Revelation, which according to an article in this *Review* for February, 1960, is "the only Revelation"; but is not this a thoroughly Greek and non-biblical way of approach? And is not the whole idea of Infallibility and Inerrancy Greek and non-biblical, presupposing a rational formulation of truth? But it is certain that the biblical writers, being Hebrews, did not think in that way at all; *'emeth* means not that which is rationally certain, but what is existentially faithful and reliable (cf. p. 202). Often it seems that those who are supposed to pin their whole faith on the Bible are unconsciously assuming a notion of Truth derived not from it but from an Aristotelian scholasticism, a conception of Truth as an *adaequatio intellectus et rei.* GABRIEL HEBERT, S.S.M.

THE CHRISTOLOGY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

By Oscar Cullmann. Translated from the German "Die Christologie des Neuen Testaments" (1957) by Shirley C. Guthrie and Charles A. G. Hall (S.C.M. Press, London), 1959, pp. XV and 342; 42/-.

This comprehensive study of the central theme of Biblical theology starts with two important observations: "Early Christian theology is almost exclusively Christology" (p. 2f.), even the work of creation being related to Christ, and: "The New Testament hardly ever speaks of the person of Christ without at the same time speaking of his work" (p. 3). The method followed in elucidating the Christology of the N.T. is the investigation of the christological titles. They are divided into four groups, as they refer to the earthly work of Jesus (Part I: Jesus the Prophet, the Suffering Servant, the High Priest),

to his future work (Part II: the Messiah, the Son of Man), to his present work (Part III: Jesus the Lord, the Saviour), and to his pre-existence. (Part IV: Jesus the Word, Jesus the Son of God, the designation of Jesus as "God"). In each case the particular title's significance in Judaism and Hellenism is investigated before the questions are discussed "if and in what sense Jesus applied this or that Christological designation to himself" and "how it was understood by the different New Testament writers." This combination of a systematic discussion of one great theological problem with the thorough historical examination of the texts from the various strata of the New Testament has proved very fruitful. While doing full justice to the individual writers, it demonstrates in a most impressive way the unity of the New Testament which so often has been lost in our studies of the various strata of early Christian thought.

It is impossible to give here an impression of the rich content of the individual chapters. They cover all aspects and problems of the Christology of the N.T. and lead the reader right into the workshop and to the battlefield of present-day scholarship. Only a few points can be made. The chapter "Jesus the Prophet" contains a discussion of John the Baptist with a balanced judgment on the Mandaean writings and the Qumran texts and a refutation of A. Schweitzer's and his Swiss disciples' "consistent eschatology" with its over-estimation of the "delayed parousia." Very impressive is the chapter on the Suffering Servant which tries to show that the solution of the Christological problem of the N.T. lies in the conception of Jesus as *ebed Yahweh:* "Jesus did not designate himself by the title 'Suffering Servant,' but according to the Synoptics and the Gospel of John he applied to himself the idea of vicarious suffering and death, and also of the *ebed's* restoration of the covenant between God and his people" (p. 79). Cullmann thinks that Jesus gained this conviction at his baptism. He shows how closely related baptism and death are for Jesus and the whole New Testament. The connection between the concept of the Lamb of God and the Eucharist, indicated by the quotation from Isa. 53 in Luke 22:37, might have been brought out more fully. Not only the Eucharistic words, but also the action of Jesus must be taken in account, as it has been done by O. Procksch in an almost forgotten contribution "Jesus der Gottesknecht" to a symposium for A. von Bulmerincq (Abhandlungen der Herdergesellschaft zu Riga 1938). The chapters on the Messiah and the Son of Man discuss the relationship between these titles. Though Cullmann does not accept Stauffer's view that Jesus has never called himself Messiah, even not in a non-political sense, he comes close to him by assuming that the words addressed to Peter after the confession at Caesarea Philippi and to the High Priest at the trial do not imply the acceptance of that title. It is highly improbable that the common assumption of all four gospels that Jesus was recognised first by the demons, later by his disciples, as the Messiah is not in line with what Jesus thought of himself. If he who called himself Son of Man applied to himself that which is written in Isa. 53 about the Servant of God, how could he refuse to be called Messiah, provided this concept was qualified by the concept of the Suffering Servant, as he himself qualified it in his reply to Peter? Should the solemn reply of Jesus to the solemn question of the High Priest Matt. 26:64, "I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God," really have been: "That is what you say, but I tell you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man . . ." (p. 119)? The limitation of the method of dividing the Christology into chapters according to the various titles becomes here manifest. Such division can lead to separation, as on the

other hand the author is compelled to include in his chapters designations like "king" or "judge" which are related to the main titles.

Of special interest to the general reader as well as to the preacher are the chapters on the "Lord," the "Son of God," and on "The Designation of Jesus as 'God.'" The discussion of the title of "Kyrios" is a masterpiece of Biblical theology. It refutes definitely all attempts to derive the concept of Jesus as the Lord from Hellenism (Bousset). The title goes back to the "maran" of the Aramaic-speaking church and has its root in the earliest liturgy. Cullmann makes quite clear that "kyrios" is not less than "theos" (just as in John 1:1 "theos" is not less than "ho theos" — p. 265f. — against Origen's famous misinterpretation). The most important result of Cullmann's work is the proof that the New Testament teaches the full divinity of Christ. What Cullmann says (p. 294f) of the Virgin Birth will not satisfy him who realises the Jewish background of the nativity stories and sees the difference between these narratives and "oriental and Hellenistic themes" that have been adduced as parallels and sources. Nor does it justice to the remarkable fact that there never seems to have been a Christological confession of the Church without the "natus de Maria virgine," while none of the classical creeds mentions the "Logos." The doctrine of the Incarnation was for the Church always bound up with the doctrine of the virgin birth. This fact should make us more reluctant to make use of the argumentum e silentio.

The full value of this mature fruit of many years of thorough research will be appreciated by the reader who studies Cullmann's exegesis of the classical passages like Phil. 2:5ff. or the prologue to St. John. This book should be on the desk of everyone who has to preach the Gospel. It leads back from the Christological myths of modern Christianity to the real Christ, the Christ of the New Testament. The latest of these myths is the demythologised Jesus of Bultmann. It is refreshing to see how Cullmann deals in a most chivalrous manner as a real historian with that great unfortunate thinker who has become a symbol of a certain Protestantism which has lost with what it regards as myth the real Jesus of history. At the same time the book should be helpful to all those who to-day speak again of the incarnation of the Word, of Christ as Lord and Saviour without realising the profound meaning of the Biblical terms.

In the preface the author asks his critics not to dispose of his interpretations with apodictic assertions and verdicts without exegetical grounds. For he has written as an exegete, knowing "no other 'method' than the proven philological-historical one." The few remarks which we can make here are not meant as a criticism of Cullmann's great book, but only as questions that occur to him who reads the book from the point of view of the history of dogma. What is the actual relationship between the Christology of the New Testament and the classical Christology of the Church as it was developed in the centuries up to Chalcedon? Cullmann says of the latter, "that although the Church attempted a solution of the problem by reference to the New Testament, its statement of the problem was nevertheless oriented all too exclusively in a direction which no longer completely corresponds to the manner in which the New Testament itself states it" (p. 3). The difference lies in the fact that the later Christological controversies "refer almost exclusively to the person or nature of Christ," while the New Testament speaks of the person of Christ always in connection with his work. New Testament Christology is "Heilsgeschichte" (in the twofold sense of "history of salvation" and "saving history"), as the concluding chapter, "Perspectives of New

Testament Christology" points out. No-one will deny that the Fathers of the 4th and 5th centuries did not simply repeat the Christology of the N.T. But it was nothing but this Christology which they defended with the means at their disposal. For a man like Basil "theology" is, as his terminology shows, essentially Christology which has now grown into the doctrine of the Trinity since the Biblical view of the Holy Spirit, the person of the Paraclete, has been taken into account. And this doctrine is deeply rooted in the liturgy ("who together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified"), just as the Christology of the New Testament is rooted in the earliest liturgy ("maranatha"). Apart from the word "homo-ousios" — which even a man like Athanasius has used very rarely — there is not one word in the Creed which is not biblical. Peter, Paul and John would certainly not have found fault with our Nicene Creed. Even the work of Christ they would have found in the phrases, "who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven . . . who for us, too, was crucified under Pontius Pilate." If the full meaning of this "for us" has not been understood in the Ancient Church, it must not be forgotten that the man who was to have brought it up at the Council of Ephesus in 431 had died a year before while his town, Hippo Regius, was besieged by the barbarians. And as to "Heilsgeschichte," one has only to look into the great Eucharistic Prayers of the Ancient Church (e.g., Apost. Const. VIII, 12 where almost the O.T. is epitomised) in order to know that this was a living reality to the Church, the liturgy being, as it were, re-enacted Heilsgeschichte. Only if we realise that the Christology of the Church is essentially the Christology of the New Testament we shall be able to avoid one great danger. If it is true that Christology is Heilsgeschichte and Heilsgeschichte Christology, what, then, is the source of our Christology? The first Christians, so we read in the concluding sentences of Cullmann's book, found their conviction in a threefold way: "Through the acceptance of the witness given in the life of Jesus with the events of Good Friday and Easter; through the powerful experience, both personal and in common worship, of the presence of the Kyrios . . . through the reflection, carried out in faith in the present Lord and the crucified Son of Man, concerning the relation of this Jesus Christ to all the rest of God's revelation. These are the sources of early Christian Christological conviction. For the modern man there are no others." If we could ask Peter, John and Paul how they got their convictions concerning Christ, they would certainly confirm that statement, but they would add another source: He opened to us the *Scriptures* (Luke 24:32). Certainly *He*, the Jesus of history who is the Lord whose mighty presence has become a reality to us. When "he opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written . . ." their Christology was finished. How could Paul and John otherwise know that all things were created through him, had they not found it in the Scriptures (e.g., Prov. 8)? And how can the modern man who is separated from the Jesus of history by almost 2,000 years achieve a Christology but by the Scripture which is not only a record of a divine revelation in the past, but at the same time the living and powerful Word of God? The theological rule must be: The only source of Christology is the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, "opened" by Christ. H. SASSE.

REVELATION AND THE BIBLE

Contemporary Evangelical Thought. Edited by Carl F. H. Henry (The Tyndale Press, London), 1959, pp. 413; 17/6.

The writer of this review belongs to the generation of Continental

theologians who as students went directly from Harnack's lecture-room to the battlefields of the First World War to discover that on the theology they had learned one could perhaps live, but not die. This highly idealistic and optimistic "theology for good boys" failed to see the realities of this world of sin and death and came under the judgment of Anselm's word, *Nondum considerasti quanti ponderis sit peccatum.* It took not less than the great breakdown of humanity in our age to teach us that the object of theology is not man and his religion, but God and His Word. To this generation Karl Barth became teacher and leader. Future church historians will evaluate the work of this great man and the influence he has exercised even far beyond the Protestant churches. They will also recognise and explain the limitations of the "theology of crisis" in Europe and the school of "Neo-Orthodogy" which grew out of it in the English-speaking world. The development of men like Brunner and Niebuhr, the failure of the "Confessional Church" in Germany, the astonishing rise of Bultmann and Tillich after the Second War point to the fact that Barth's theology, great and influential as it is, has not been able to fully achieve that "turn from subject to object" which was its original aim.

To-day it is obvious that one of the reasons for the failure of Barthian and Neo-Orthodox theology was its inability to understand why for the Reformers as for the Christian Church of all ages Holy Scripture *is* the Word of God without any qualifications. In this situation a new movement was bound to come which would try to restore a truth which had been neglected by European theology in such a way that even Barth had to pay his tribute to that Liberalism against which he had revolted. This new movement, noticeable in the English-speaking world for years, presents itself in a most impressive way in the present symposium. Dr. Henry, the well-known editor of *Christianity Today,* has proved again his ability to bring together for common work theologians of various background on the basis of a common recognition of the unconditional authority of Holy Writ. His preface describes the background and origin of this book in which 24 contributors from various countries (England, Scotland, America, Holland, France, South Africa) and of different denominational background (Anglican, Presbyterian, Reformed, Lutheran, Baptist) make their contributions to the problems of "Revelation and the Bible." The first six chapters deal with the problem of Revelation (Berkouwer, Clark, Jewett, Martin, Stonehouse, Packer). Professor Berkouwer, the theological leader of the Reformed Free Church in Holland who has made a deep impression even on K. Barth (see the touching passage on the new Fundamentalism in the Preface to Vol. IV, 2 of Barth's Dogmatics) deals with "General and Special Revelation" in a way that does justice to the fact of the general revelation as taught in Holy Scripture, while rejecting the *theologia naturalis* of Rome and Protestant Modernism. The subsequent contributions show how the Special Revelation is rational (Clark), historical and personal (Jewett), objective (Martin) and Scriptural (Stonehouse), while J. I. Packer gives a review of contemporary views of Revelation. Besides the return to the Reformers there is noticeable a promising attempt to solve the philosophical problem after Existentialism has failed. The limited space allows not for a full solution of the problems. The authors know that their work cannot be more than a beginning. The major part of the book is dedicated to the problem of the Revelation in Scripture. Stibbs ("The Witness of Scripture to its Inspiration"), Marcel ("Our Lord's Use of Scripture") and Nicole ("New Testament Use of the Old Testament") give the Scriptural basis of a doctrine of Holy Writ. Young deals with the canon of the O.T., Young with the Apocrypha,

and Ridderbos with the canon of the N.T. Here one feels the limitations of the space available. The problem of the Septuagint as well as the problem of the understanding of the canon by the Reformers require a more elaborate treatment than it can be given on a few pages. The same is true of "The Church Doctrine of Inspiration" by Bromiley (pp. 205-17). Finlayson's valuable review of "Contemporary Ideas of Inspiration" is followed by contributions by Harrison, Ramm, Mueller, Kevan, Wiseman, Bruce, Ridderbos, Tenney, which mainly deal with concrete problems of interpretation. Of special interest are the discussions of archæological confirmation of the Old and New Testament (Wiseman, Bruce) and on Reversals of Old and New Testament criticism (Ridderbos, Tenney). "Authority and the Bible" by Geldenhuys and "The Unity of the Bible" by Gaebelein provide a fitting conclusion.

This book is a testimony to the great seriousness with which the doctrine of Revelation and the Bible is being investigated throughout Christendom. More attention could have been paid to what Roman Catholic scholarship is doing on the same questions. What strikes the reader is the spirit of humility that pervades the book. Criticism becomes nowhere unnecessary polemics. This symposium is a great promise. The extraordinary cheap price will make it available to the widest circles, especially also among non-theologians. H. SASSE.

THE SCOPE OF DEMYTHOLOGIZING

By John Macquarrie. Library of Philosophy and Theology (S.C.M. Press, London), 1960, pp. 256; 25/-.

This book is an attempt to place Bultmann correctly in the theological world. It is fortunate for us that Dr. Macquarrie has undertaken the task, for Professor Bultmann has himself said (to the reviewer) that Macquarrie is one of the four men who really understand what he is about. The book concerns itself with the basic and puzzling paradox of Bultmann's work (about which Bultmann himself has not paused to think sufficiently), i.e., the paradox that arises on the basis of his negations connected with "myth," on the one hand, and his affirmations concerning the kerygma, on the other — which on the face of things appear to cancel out each other.

Macquarrie takes up that latently bewildering feature in Bultmann's theology, i.e., the real status of the Gospel events. For it is true that, from one side, Bultmann's language is that of the N.T., while, on the other, it is irritatingly and deliberately non-commital. The trouble arises from the word "demythologizing." Bultmann himself in his latest book agrees that it is a most unsatisfactory word, because too many people understand too many diverse things by it. It is not the same thing as existential interpretation of the Bible, though it should help on the way. However, Bultmann is clear in his own mind about it, even if he does not make it clear to others. In his view neither "demythologizing" nor existential interpretation is ultimate, and he will not allow either of these disciplines to govern his case. Both are methods of investigation and procedure — neither of them is a predetermining metaphysic. It is the kerygma which is ultimate and authoritative and irreducible; it is the point beyond which demythologizing may not pass. This apparently is not clear to Bultmann's critics, so he is caught in a cross-fire of criticism from those on the right (like Barth, Cullmann, and the Roman Catholics) who fear for the survival of the kerygma; and from those on the left (like Buri, Jaspers and the logical empiricists) who, having seen in Bultmann a promised emancipation of theology which does not, to their dismay, eventuate, castigate him for a loss of nerve, or obscurity, or default. Macquarrie is masterly in his analysis of the critical field, and shows

that the retention of the kerygma has a two-way operation (a) in calming the misgivings of the orthodox right and (b) in resisting the dissolution of the Gospel attempted by the liberal and positivistic left. Macquarrie holds that Bultmann is an apologist and a "middle-of-the-road" man. This accords with the reviewer's own conviction that Bultmann is a limited existentialist, and with Jaspers' charge that he is a surreptitious providentialist.

Macquarrie, then, exposes the paradox in Bultmann, and points to the fact that his theological method and conceptual framework are in need of further clarifying treatment. Macquarrie, it seems, is clearer about Bultmann than Bultmann is himself; and from this we learn a lot and profit immensely. It is also worth pursuing his point that Bultmann creates his own difficulties not so much with his concept of "myth," as with an idea of "modernity" which is not even true to the facts. From another angle we all profit from Macquarrie's immense competence in, and admirable knowledge of philosophical and theological works in German and French (some of which have been translated into English since he used them for the delivery of the Lectures in 1957). This brings a field of theology within our purview which would otherwise have been denied to most of us, and makes invigorating reading. We have also the benefit of the penetrating comments which he makes upon the criticisms from both the theological right and left. The book abounds with first-rate insights "on the side." The reviewer's one regret is that Macquarrie did not spend more time tracing in more precision Bultmann's use of "myth" and "demythologizing" (which are fundamentally epistemological concepts). It would also represent Bultmann more accurately if "objective" on p. 17, line 21 read "objectifying"; and "falsely" were inserted before "objective" on p. 19, line 9.

Macquarrie established his reputation with his earlier book on Bultmann. This book will secure his reputation as the most competent scholar on Bultmann in the English-speaking world. The reviewer stands in admiration before the book, with which he is in enthusiastic accord.

COLIN DUNCAN.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

Volume One, Chapters I-VIII. The English Text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes by John Murray (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids), 1959, pp. 408; $5.00.

A new full-scale commentary on Romans by an evangelical scholar is quite an event. Handley Moule's small but significant commentary was published in 1879, and James Denney contributed Romans to the Expositor's Greek Testament in 1900. There does not seem to have been an English commentary from this Reformed standpoint since (nor anything at all on the Greek text). Dodd and Barrett are both important, but they are in a somewhat different tradition, as are the German and French commentaries. The new work, which recalls Charles Hodge's commentary (1835, re-written 1864), both in style and theology, does not disappoint. It enhances the New International Commentary series, of which it is the ninth volume to appear. It is based on the A.R.V. (1901) text, and deals with the Greek text in footnotes. Only a dozen pages are given to Introduction, but 54 pages are devoted to four appendices.

The first appendix is on Justification. in O.T. and N.T. and the Romish doctrine. The weakness of this otherwise valuable essay is that it never comes to grips with what is meant by "righteous" or "righteousness" as predicated of God. It is unwise to assume we know

the meaning of these terms. The second appendix examines the thesis recently advocated by Dr. A. G. Hebert and Dr. T. Torrance that "faith," in such verses as Rom. 3:22, 26; Gal. 2:16, 20; 3:22, and Phil. 3:9 should, in accordance with the meaning of *'emunah* in the O.T., be understood as referring, not to our faith, but to the faithfulness of God and of Christ The thesis is carefully and sympathetically considered, but rejected. The reviewer is not, however, convinced by the refutation. Though Murray considers the genitive with *pistis* to be objective, not subjective, in all the nearest parallel phrases, he does not consider the possibility that Mark 1:22 might mean "Hold to the faithfulness of God" — excellent sense when the incident is compared with Romans 3:3, and 9-11 — and he is surely wrong in taking the genitives of James 2:1, Rev. 2:13, 14:12 as objective, whatever the force of *pistis* in them. More important, he does not really penetrate the concept of *pistis* itself; his careful grammatical scrutiny is not matched by a similar semantic evaluation. Has Professor Murray noted that in the LXX of Hab. 2:4 the genitive is probably subjective. "the just shall live by *my faith* (sc. faithfulness)"? Since the Hebrew has "his faith," and Paul in quoting the verse has no pronoun at all, it is worth considering whether Paul's exegesis (in both "from faith to faith" and "by faith of Jesus Christ unto all that believe") is not an attempt to combine both meanings of the text of Habakkuk. The third appendix discusses the exegesis of Isa. 53:11, and the fourth criticises Barth's exegesis of Rom. 5:12-21. "It cannot be aid too plainly that if we adopt (Barth's) construction we must abandon exegesis." C. H. Dodd is similarly charged with an "exegetically monstrous" interpretation of the passage (p. 181).

The commentary is of a high quality throughout both in careful exegesis and in theological interpretation, as one would expect from the Professor of Systematic Theology at Westminster Seminary. Two questions, both in regard to words, occur to the reviewer. Professor Murray distinguishes between God's righteousness and His justice (on 1:17) but without defining the meaning of either term: would it not be better to speak at once of God's justice (*or* righteousness) and then show from the text and its antecedents what this is revealed to be? Again, on p. 280, the author says that Paul "is under the necessity of using this word *(homoioma)* here because he uses the term 'sinful flesh' and he could not have said that Christ was sent in 'sinful flesh.'" But is this exegesis? It is doubtful whether *homoioma* guards the truth of Christ's sinlessness (whatever may be true of "likeness" in English). If *homoioma* excludes "sinful," on what ground does it not also exclude "flesh"? Surely *homoioma* here means "form," as in 1:23, 5:14 and Phil. 2:7. The solution, then, may lie not in the traditional modification of the meaning of *homoioma* but in a re-examination of what may be meant by *sarx hamartias*, in which form, says Paul, God sent His Son (cf. J. A. T. Robinson, *The Body*, pp. 38, 39).

This is an important commentary, and it is to be hoped that Vol. II will be given to us as soon as possible.

D. W. B. ROBINSON.

SHORTER NOTICES

Whitefield's Journals, edited by Iaan Murray (The Banner of Truth Trust, London, 15/-). Based on the text of the original unabridged versions of the Wale's edition (1905) which covers the first 26 years of Whitefield's life, this contains in addition an unpublished Journal of 1744-5 (reprinted from the December, 1938, number of the American *Church History*), the manuscript of which had been lying unnoticed

in the Library of Princeton Theological Seminary since 1816. Whitefield's answer to Wesley's sermon on "Free Grace" is included as an appendix. "The Journals will show the reader," asserts the Editor in his Introduction, "that it was Whitefield and not John Wesley who was used in commencing the revival in England, and this doctrinal appendix will demonstrate the character of the message that shook Britain and North America two hundred years ago . . . It was not an Arminian creed which originated the great awakening of the eighteenth century." This first complete edition of the great Evangelist's Journals, splendidly produced and amply illustrated, covering almost 600 pages, is priced at the remarkably low figure of fifteen shillings.

The Select Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 2 (The Banner of Truth Trust, 10/6). This volume of Sermons, following the text of the 1839 London edition of Edward's works, includes the notable discourse on "Sinners in the hands of an angry God," and concludes with the moving "Pardon for the greatest sinner." The powers of the New Englander as an expositor are most evident in his sermon on I Peter 2:19, which covers almost 20,000 words.

The Christian Ministry, by Charles Bridges, and *An All-Round Ministry,* by C. H. Spurgeon (The Banner of Truth Trust, 13/6 and 10/6). The former which went through nine editions in 1829-49 considers the subject comprehensively in its personal, homiletical and pastoral aspects as bearing on minsterial efficiency. The section on "The Spirit of Scriptural Preaching" is outstanding and in it some important things are stated in a memorable way. E.g., "Even while Christ is the text, self may be the spirit and substance of our sermon, as if we were lifting up the cross of Christ to hang our own glory upon it" (p. 327). The second volume is a reprint of twelve presidential addresses given at the Annual Conference of the Pastors' Conference, 1872-90. The preaching office especially in its doctrinal aspect is given prominence for the period witnessed a landslide in Evangelicalism culminating in the Baptist denomination in the Down-grade Controversy. Spurgeon's pertinent observations, frequently illustrated by apt anecdote, are given clear and pointed expression. E.g., "We need men who . . . are pillars in the house of God, abiding in their places; and not mere caterpillars, crawling after something to eat" (p. 391). This is a book of continuing value.

Calvin, by Emanuel Stickelberger (James Clarke, London, 13/6). This concise account and interpretation of the life and work of the Reformer by an eminent Swiss man of letters combines accuracy and balance with vividness and dramatic power. Concerning the death of Servetus (Protestantism's only stake) there is the significant comment: "It is the stake taken over from Rome, which Calvin did not want, to which Servetus' case owes its tragic fame" (p. 130). In this volume, as Hermann Burte asserts, "the life of this man, freed from mysteries and prejudices that surround it, becomes a compelling figure for the present."

Backgrounds to Dispensationalism, by C. B. Bass (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, $3.50) surveys and discusses the origin of Dispensationalism in the thought of John Nelson Darby and its development in particular through the Plymouth Brethren movement, and more generally through the influence of the Scofield Bible and other media. The writer concludes that the distinguishing features of Dispensationalism — "its divisive compartmentalisation of the redemptive plan of God, its literalness as to prophetic interpretation, and its separatist spirit" (p. 63) — represents a serious divergence from historic Christianity. The value of this useful study is enhanced by an exhaustive bibliography.

R. Swanton.

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